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In This Issue . . .

<i>Commander's Corner</i>	3
<i>2nd Lt. Travis Robinson show that it is ability and attitude that matters</i>	4
<i>Letter from the Editor</i>	9
<i>S.D. Wing's role in distributing polio vaccine in 1955: A newspaper review</i>	11
<i>No greater calling</i>	18
<i>On the airways to 6,000 hours</i>	21
<i>S.D. Wing Handout</i>	31
<i>S.D. Wing makes wind tunnel for aerospace studies</i>	33



COVER PHOTO: Lt. Col. Jeremy Langrock, CAP (left), Maj. Karla West, CAP (back), and Capt. Matt Meert, CAP (right), fly some of the first COVID-19 vaccine doses in the nation to Watertown, S.D. on Dec. 15, 2020.

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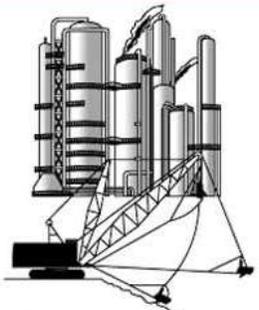
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Commander's Corner

*By Col. Nicholas Gengler, CAP
South Dakota Wing Commander*



Wow! What a hectic year 2020 was!

The coronavirus pandemic has turned our world upside down. In S.D., the virus didn't affect us too much during the summer. Once fall arrived, however, cases started spiking, and our Wing had to go into Phase 0, meaning we could not meet in person anymore. Everything had to go virtual. We had a taste of that back in the spring when the virus first started to spike.

We were in Phase 0 in the spring for 3 months. Same as the fall/winter time, but for some reason, it all seemed longer this last time. We then returned to Phase 1 then Phase 2. We recently upgraded to Phase 3, which is making most wing and unit activities much easier.

I applaud our members. During the summer months, we took advantage of every opportunity to host an activity or training. We innovated a little since we could not host any overnight activities. We split up the Aerospace Education days across the state to limit travel and have everyone arrive and leave in a single day. We did the same to our SAREXs and had more localized training. We held a couple of NRA events as well for the cadets. It was a good summer. Still not ideal, but we were adapting and making it work. We could still do what was familiar to us.

Once the fall hit, and the coronavirus cases increased, and we went to Phase 0, it was all back to virtual training. We didn't slow down as a Wing. I applaud our members for their dedication. We had several search and rescue missions, transported vaccines, and continued to train virtually. We had virtual Emergency Services training and a virtual Cadet Leadership Academy. We continued to find ways for us to come together as professional volunteers.

This pandemic has tested Civil Air Patrol on what defines us. What is CAP when we can't meet in person? How do we operate? We have had to change our mode of operation, and I congratulate everyone who stuck with us. It wasn't easy, and we will continue to strive together to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Moving forward, we are still planning in-person events like Wing Conference and Encampment. We have hope that the virus will continue to slow its spread, and the vaccine will help eliminate it from our communities. We need to continue to plan for the future with an evolved outlook on how we can still train during the pandemic. I know our members will not disappoint.

Thank you all! 🇺🇸

2nd Lt. Travis Robinson shows that it is ability and attitude that matters

*By Maj. Karla West, CAP
SDWG Assistant Public Affairs Officer*

When I first met 2nd Lt. Travis Robinson a few years ago, I thought to myself, “Nice guy, but I don’t know how he is going to fit into Civil Air Patrol.”

Travis is in a wheelchair, and much of what we do is walking around rugged terrain on a ground team or getting in and out of an airplane. As I started talking to him and finding out more about him, I decided this IS the type of person we need in CAP.

Travis has never let anything stop him from learning and doing all he could to help others and live life to its fullest. In a wheelchair since the age of 16, following a car accident, he enjoys being a member of the Civil Air Patrol because he can be a leader, not only to Cadets but Senior Members as well.



Travis’s biggest lesson he has learned in life is that when you are part of a team, you can accomplish more than you can by trying to do it alone. In CAP, he is active in communications, logistics, and, most recently, drones. He is also the Deputy Commander of Seniors at the Sioux Falls Composite Squadron. Outside of his CAP volunteering, he is active in hockey, basketball, lacrosse, biking and enjoys spending time with his family.

Travis started out just laying low for a few meetings until he met one member who showed him the world of communications and discovered that he needed to learn more about this. Travis dove straight into the world of learning all he could learn about communications and radios. One of the things that he not only loves to do but is good at is teaching and mentoring both Cadets and Seniors.

“The more you know, the more you can teach people, and watching them grow in what I have taught them is an awesome feeling,” Travis said. If you ask Travis to do something, he will give it 100%. He may not be able to get out and march with Cadets, but he can help them look up the regulations of the proper way to do it and watch them.

Travis aspired to be in the military before his accident and enjoys the military aspect of CAP.



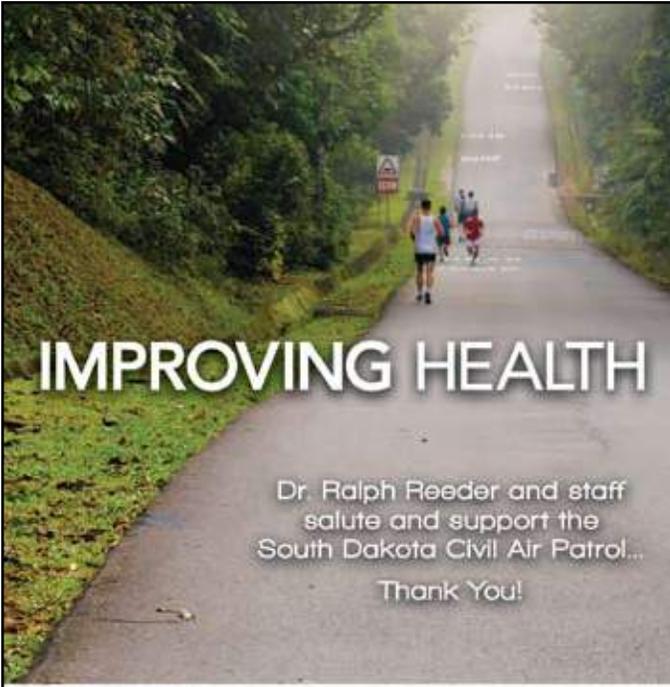
2nd Lt. Travis Robinson, CAP, assists with putting up an army tent at the 2019 Sioux Falls Air Show. Photo by Maj. Karla West, CAP.

“If I had known about Civil Air Patrol when I was younger, I would have joined much sooner,” Travis said. “Being part of a team and knowing you are training to help people in an emergency is very motivating.”

Travis has been moving around in different areas in CAP to learn it all, from communications to helping with logistics at the squadron-level and now Wing. He is finding his latest passion and challenge in drones. He has become a licensed FAA drone pilot and is personally working on building them and developing a program with search grids so they can be used more efficiently.



In SDWG, Travis has been taken in as part of the family from the beginning, his attitude that we are all one team and support services is just as important if not more important to a mission than any other area is a lesson we all need to remember. He understands and teaches everyone that the mission will not



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be accomplished if we do not all work together. Some people join CAP to do the things they consider fun and do not realize the importance of the team aspect.

Would he love to jump in a plane or hit the ground on a mission, of course, but he knows that being in a wheelchair would take valuable time away from the mission and has found the best way he can be a part of the team.

“The learning in CAP is endless, and taking things step by step is the way to do it,” Travis said. “There is not a better feeling than knowing someone needs you, and you have the knowledge to help them. Find your niche and embrace it.”

Travis has taught us not to assume that people with a physical disability have a tragic life, you just need to treat them as you want to be treated, but with a few adjustments. Adjust your stance to look them in the eye when you talk, speak to the person, not the chair, do not assume they know less than you because of the chair. It’s ok to ask them if they need help with certain things. Most importantly, don’t feel sorry for them.

One of my personal memories is when we were at a drone training and learning night when we had to go across a bumpy field. I offered to push his chair for him thinking he needed help. He replied, “Nope, I got this.” I watched him roll across the field with ease as I tripped and almost fell. Lesson learned! 🇺🇸



2nd Lt. Travis Robinson, CAP shows Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Gabriel Healy, CAP, his drone flying skills at a 2020 Sioux Falls Composite Squadron aerospace education activity. Photo by Maj. Karla West, CAP.

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Letter from the Editor: We might be giants

*By Lt. Col. Todd Epp, CAP
SDWG Chief of Staff/Outreach*

I'm sure you're all tired about hearing how difficult 2020 was for not just the South Dakota Wing of the Civil Air Patrol but for basically everyone in the world.

In my 62 years, it was the strangest, hardest, and most stressful year of my life, personally, professionally, and in the CAP. We had not just a viral pandemic but illness, social isolation, job losses, economic convulsions, and political unrest.

But we made it.

At least most of us did. Some of us, however, including SDWG and CAP colleagues, did not. For those we grieve.

But despite it all, we persevered.

We continued to mentor Cadets, albeit via Zoom and other online services. We continued to meet and train, albeit it by Zoom and other online services. We were even able to do some fun things, like build a miniature wind tunnel. (See article in this issue.)

However, when it really mattered, despite it all, we were ready. We conducted several missing person searches at the end of the year, one lasting over several days over the Christmas holiday.

And to end the year and to start the new one, we delivered hope in the form of COVID-19 vaccines to Watertown and Mobridge. Those vaccines immediately went into health care providers' arms that same day. Not even South Dakota snows and winds could stop us.

It is easy to get involved and lose oneself in the very necessary minutiae of planning and executing events and missions. Conflicting personalities sometimes rub up against each other. (Yes, Todd is guilty as charged.) There is frustration that things either don't happen or don't happen as fast as we would like. There are disagreements about how to proceed or even if to proceed.

But we persevered!

We carried out our humanitarian and other missions under trying circumstances in 2020 and into the start of 2021. We delivered hope to a state that needed it in the depths of coronavirus cases and deaths. We gave hope to loved ones worried about their lost family members.

We did the jobs that that the Air Force, the State of South Dakota, and our citizens expect us to do. We did them with no excuses. We did them and did them well.

Maybe all this isn't as exciting as hunting Nazi submarines in World War II, as our founding fathers and mothers did. But I think these are great accomplishments.

Nonetheless, once the pandemic passes and life returns to something closer to "normal," at future wing conferences and gatherings, we'll look back at this time as one of the "golden eras" of our wing and national organization. It will be the thing that future members will look on with in awe and pride.

And we too, members of the SDWG in 2020-21, will be giants. 

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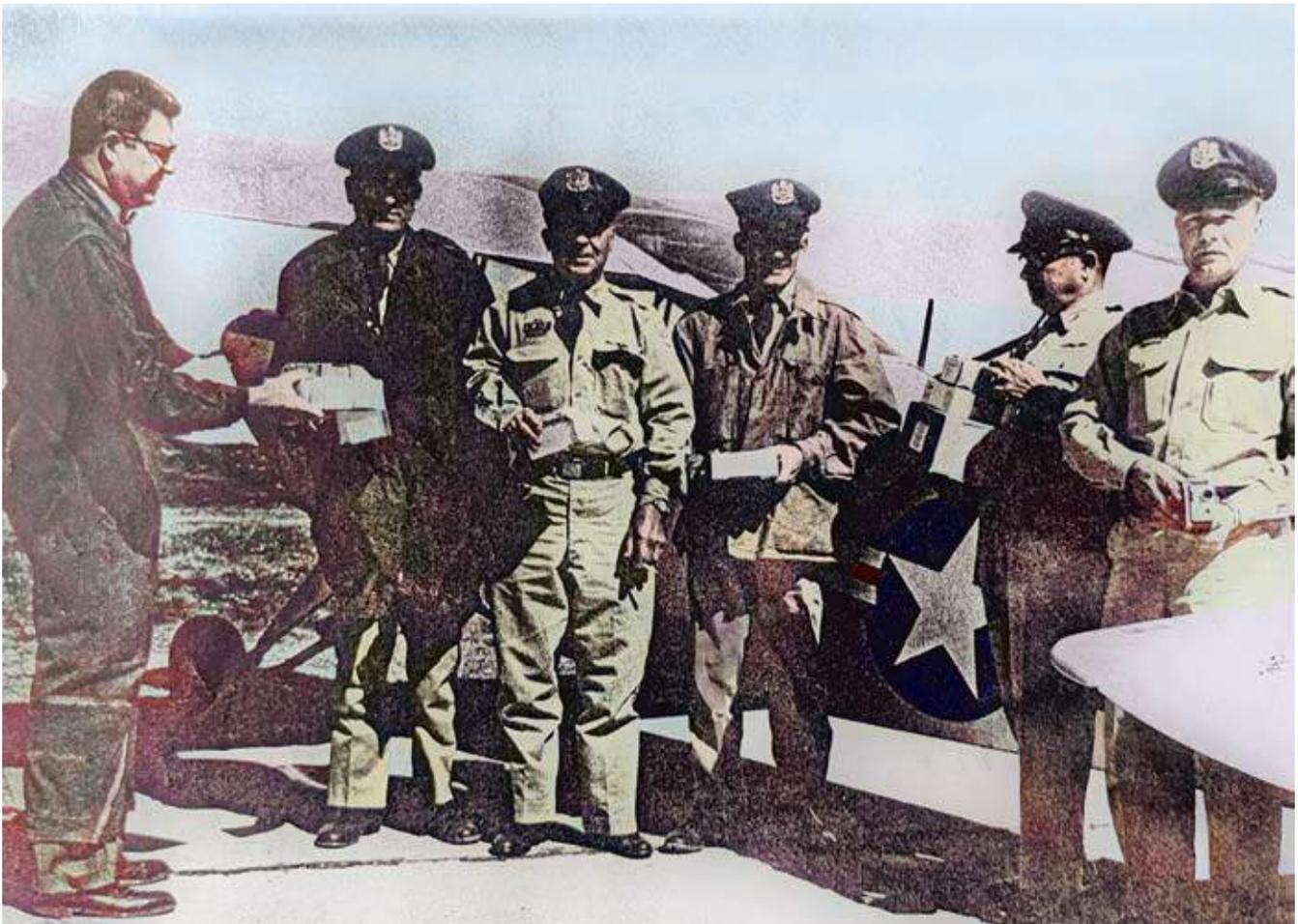
S.D. Wing's role in distributing polio vaccine in 1955: A newspaper review

*By Technical Sgt. F. Shawn Bawden, CAP
SDWG Chief of NCOs*

The operational dimension of CAP's History Program is often overlooked although it's one of the program's principal objectives.¹

Although SDWG's role in distributing the polio vaccine occurred 65 years ago, a review of historic newspaper articles provides some insights that could help with the mission to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine. Some conclusions from this research include:

1. SDWG and South Dakota health officials planned for several weeks prior to the delivery of the first round of polio vaccines.



A colorized photo of one of the SDWG polio vaccine flights in 1955. Photographer unknown.

¹ CAPR 210-1 Civil Air Patrol Historical Program, section 1 "Purpose and Objectives of CAP Historical Program," August 2, 2012. For more information about operational use of USAF's History Program, see Bennie J. Davis, "Redefining History: Air Force embraces the past for a more efficient future," Airman Magazine: The Official Magazine of the United States Air Force, October 9, 2018, <https://airman.dodlive.mil/2018/10/09/redefining-history/> ; and, "The Urgency of Military History," Federation of American Scientists, April 7, 2020, <https://fas.org/blogs/secrecy/2020/04/mil-history/>.



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2. The first round of polio vaccines was delayed by 3 weeks from its initial delivery date.
3. There was great interest in the media prior to the polio vaccine's first deliveries by SDWG on May 7, 1955. This dropped to near-zero immediately after the first sorties.
4. There was little to no coordination between SDWG and South Dakota health officials for the deliveries of the second round of polio vaccinations although both groups knew this would be needed 2-4 weeks after the first inoculations.

During the early 1950s, polio rates in the U.S. were above 25,000 annually. In 1952 and 1953, the U.S. experienced an outbreak of 58,000 and 35,000 polio cases, respectively, up from a typical number of some 20,000 a year, with deaths in those years numbering 3,200 and 1,400.² An inactivated polio vaccine,

² Sophie Ochmann and Max Rose, "Polio - Polio Cases based on U.S. Public Health Service, 1910-1951," *Our World in Data*, <https://ourworldindata.org/polio>.



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developed by Jonas Salk, was licensed in 1955 and a mass immunization campaign was soon launched.

By mid-April 1955, South Dakota state health officials were working with SDWG to plan the distribution of the vaccine:

Dr. G. J. Van Heuvelen, state health officer, said today he had no definite word South Dakota's allocation of polio vaccine would arrive this weekend. Dr. Van Heuvelen said a meeting was being held Friday in Sioux Falls with Civil Air Patrol officers relative to delivery of the Salk vaccine when it does arrive. "If it arrives this weekend, it won't take us long to sort it for the respective counties," he said.³

According to the plan, after bulk shipments were flown into Sioux Falls and Rapid City, the vaccines would be divided into allotments for each county with enough to vaccinate 90% of the state's 30,250 first and second grade children. Notably, Dr. Van Heuvelen stated that only 90% was being sent because 10% of the children's parents were not expected to give consent to the injections. Shipments from Rapid City and Sioux Falls would be flown to the counties by SDWG if there was an airport at the county seat. Otherwise the vaccines would be delivered by ground transportation.⁴

The plan for distributing the vaccine was refined during the last two weeks of April. USAF planes would bring the vaccine to Rapid City and then hand them over to SDWG in order to expedite the distribution of the vaccine in the West River area. Twelve SDWG pilots from two West River squadrons were on standby to fly these sorties as soon as the vaccine was available. At this point, deliveries were expected to be made during the third week of April. Among the West River counties to receive air deliveries from SDWG were Bennett, Butte, Custer, Haakon, Harding, Jackson, Lawrence, Meade, Perkins, and Washabaugh.⁵

At the same time, SDWG units in the East River area were tasked with distributing the vaccine to 34 counties and included the squadrons from Huron, Madison, Milbank, Mitchell, Sioux Falls, and Yankton.⁶

Nevertheless, two weeks later the state was still waiting on the first shipment of the vaccine, which was now estimated to arrive on or before May 6.⁷ The first round of vaccinations were flown to Rapid City and Sioux Falls late May 6 by planes from Ellsworth AFB and the South Dakota Air National Guard.⁸

SDWG began flying sorties the next day although the first use of the vaccine was put on hold pending a report from the U.S. Surgeon General. CAP planes began landing at the Rapid City airport at 7:30 am to pick up the vaccine. According to one newspaper report, "Flying into the towns, [CAP] pilots circled three times to attract attention of doctors and health service officials.

The medical officials were waiting when the planes landed to pick up the vaccine. Fifteen small packages from the Pitman-Moore Company constituted the vaccine shipment to West River. The entire supply of vaccine came in two cardboard boxes about 18 inches deep and slightly over a foot square."⁹

3 "Nothing Definite," *Rapid City Journal*, April 14, 1955, 1.

4 "Salk Vaccine To Take Wings In S.D. Plans," *Argus Leader* (Sioux Falls, South Dakota), April 15, 1955, 9.

5 "EAFB Plane to Bring Polio Vaccine Here," *Rapid City Journal*, April 17, 1955, 3; and, "12 CAP Pilots Ready To Fly Salk Vaccine," *Rapid City Journal*, April 18, 1955, 3.

6 "CAP Will Handle Area Distribution," *Argus Leader* (Sioux Falls, South Dakota), May 6, 1955, 1.

7 "S.D. Vaccine Is Due Soon," *Argus Leader* (Sioux Falls, South Dakota), April 28, 1955, 1.

8 "Await Word On Safety Of Salk Vaccine," *Argus Leader* (Sioux Falls, South Dakota), May 7, 1955, 1.

9 "CAP Ships Deliver In West River," *Rapid City Journal*, May 7, 1955, 1.



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It should be noted that no newspaper articles have been found regarding the distribution of the vaccine in South Dakota following the first sorties on May 7 until one month later (June 7). Moreover, the *Argus Leader*, arguably the leading newspaper in the East River area, had little to say about the vaccine's distribution by SDWG on May 7. This is striking in many ways, especially since a second round of inoculations was necessary 2-4 weeks after the first one.

On June 7 state officials were advised that the second round of vaccines would be delivered soon and the state health officer, Dr. Van Heuvelen, planned to contact SDWG "to determine if that organization would fly the vaccine to counties in order that immunization clinics could begin early next week."¹⁰

This indicates that there was little to no coordination between the state and SDWG regarding the second round of vaccinations. In fact, Floyd Hesler, executive officer for the Rapid City squadron, went on record to state that he "hasn't heard a word so far" on distributing the vaccine and that "nobody has informed me or told me to have flights ready. It would seem likely that we will be flying the vaccine in but we should be notified officially pretty soon if we are to get up enough planes." Despite Hesler's pessimism, squadrons from Hot Springs, Huron, Madison, Milbank, Mitchell, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Winner, and Yankton begin preparing for sorties.¹¹

Bad weather also caused some consternation as reported by a local West River newspaper: "South Dakota's polio vaccination program hit another snag today when a Civil Air Patrol plane which was to deliver vaccine to county health officers was grounded by bad weather."¹²

After June 11, 1955, no further newspaper articles were found about SDWG's role in distributing the polio vaccine until early 1956 when it was announced that the unit would receive an award for its efforts. In February 1956, SDWG members met in Sioux Falls to "accept from the National Polio Foundation an appreciation award to be given to these civilian volunteer pilots who flew the Salk polio vaccine last summer to each county seat in South Dakota so that inoculations of children could be speeded."¹³ 

10 "State's Vaccine Shipped Today," *Rapid City Journal*, June 7, 1955, 1; and, "Supply Is Expected Very Soon," *Argus Leader* (Sioux Falls, South Dakota), June 7, 1955, 1.

11 "CAP Will Fly Salk Vaccine This Weekend," *Rapid City Journal*, June 8, 1955, 3; and, "Van Heuvelen Sure Polio Serum Safe," *Argus Leader* (Sioux Falls, South Dakota), 1.

12 "Bad Weather Stalls Shots," *Lead Daily Call* (Lead, South Dakota) June 11, 1955, 1.

13 "Local CAP Wing To Get Polio Award," *Argus Leader* (Sioux Falls, South Dakota), January 31, 1956, 18; and, "Round Robin," *Argus Leader* (Sioux Falls, South Dakota), February 3, 1956, 3.

No Greater Calling

*By Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Abbie Williams, CAP
Big Sioux Composite Squadron*

Semper Vigilans.

In Latin, it means “always vigilant.” It is the Civil Air Patrol motto, but is it more?

I believe it is. It’s a way of life. It’s a call to always be vigilant for a way to help your fellow man. It is a reminder that in a world focused on looking out for “number one,” that it’s not all about me, my life and my priorities. It’s about others.

Author and motivational Bryant H. McGill says, “No time is better spent than that in service to your fellow man.” In Civil Air Patrol, we are called to serve. Emergency Services (ES) is one of the many ways to live out the core values: Integrity, Volunteer Service, Respect, and Excellence. As members of CAP, we have made a commitment to serve our communities.

“Being part of ground team, working radios, acting as a mission staff assistant—these are things that a teenager can do that make a real-life difference,” says Col. David Small, Jr., the immediate past Commander of the SDWG. “All too often, young people are put on the sidelines and aren’t given a chance to make a real difference. CAP trains cadets, then trusts them to make a lifesaving difference. This is powerful!”

Cadet or Senior, young or young at heart, you have the power to make a difference in someone’s life. You have the power to take part in life saving missions.

So, where do you start? First Lieutenant Denise Clement, Commander of the Lincoln County Composite Squadron, suggests that you “Start in an area that interests you. There are many different areas/positions in which to train. If you have questions, make sure you ask. That’s how we learn.”



Cadet Chief Master Sgt. Abigail Williams, CAP. Photo by 2nd Lt. Rudy Trias, CAP.

What if you don't have an interest? Then maybe you should follow the advice of Capt. Tyler Gross, Commander of the Big Sioux Composite Squadron, on SAREXs, "Show up to a few and try different areas (ground team, mission base, or aircrew). It's hard to know if you're going to enjoy something until you try."

Talk to your Squadron ES Officer. Their job is to help you with ES. Don't know who your ES officer is? Ask.

Once you have gone to a few SAREXs, once you've found what you want to train in, keep training. There is always more you can learn. First Lieutenant Clement put it right when she said, "There is no such thing as 'too much training.' The more you train, the better you will be able to assist in an active search and rescue mission."

ES takes commitment. Training takes time. But that is time well spent. Consider the earlier quote again from McGill. Life is short. Shouldn't we strive to help someone every chance you get. Captain Richard Rezac, SDWG Chief of Staff, would ask parents, "To encourage their children to step up and serve in these capacities. They won't get rich from this work. But no one can ever deny that what your son or daughter is doing is important."

ES isn't easy. Sometimes, no matter how well you train, how hard you work, the outcome is not what you hoped. Captain Rezac said, "The hardest part for me is when we don't have a positive outcome. That's when you ask yourself, 'What more could I have done?' It's in those times when you have to take comfort knowing you did what you could. And commit yourself to train and learn so that you can do better next time."

So, you keep training. You keep working. You never give up. Because what you do in CAP, what you do in ES, is important. You may never know how much of a difference you've made in someone else's life.

You can serve in so many ways. It can be as simple as getting your CAP driver's license. Consider how Maj. Karla West got her start in ES: "I remember the first week I joined and got my CAP driver's license. I was called to take a ground team to look for a missing plane down by the Nebraska border. New and eager to help, I said yes. Ten hours of driving the infamous 'Ghostbusters' van full of cadets later, I had my full initiation into being a ground team member and loved every minute of it."

"The Ironic thing is," Capt. Rezac remarked, "The best thing a young person (middle or high school) can do if they're considering a career in emergency services/emergency management is to become a CAP cadet. We're the only organization that allows youth to serve on real-world missions the way we do. Our cadets receive practical emergency skills, FEMA certifications and real-world experience that they can carry for the rest of their careers."

And you can use your training outside of CAP. Captain Rezac shared a story about his experience on Ground Zero, the site of the 9/11 terror attacks on the World Trade Center.

"I was trained as an EMT, which I started as a CAP cadet in Pierre many years before. My employer sent many of us to Ground Zero to help in any way we can. With my background, I was sent to Ground Zero to treat and triage recovery workers who had been injured on the job, working there for 10 weeks. I consider it a privilege to have served there. I would do it again in a minute."

The emergency services work we do, in and out of CAP, makes a real-world difference. We can inspire the next generation of members. Members who are always vigilant for ways to serve. I'll end this with labor leader Walter Reuther's quote that I have taken to heart, and I hope you will, too.

"There is no greater calling than to serve your fellow men. There is no greater contribution than to help the weak. There is no greater satisfaction than to have done it well." 

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On the airway to 6,000 hours

*By Col. Mike Beason, CAP
SDWG Past Commander*

On Dec 31, 2016, I went flying in a Cessna Cardinal (C-177) from the Rapid City Regional Airport with my daughter and granddaughter.



A Cessna 177B Cardinal. Photo used under Wikimedia Commons license.

On that flight, my logbook shows that I achieved 6,000 hours of flight time. The plane was a rental that I had first flown earlier that day with an instructor to certify me as qualified in that plane. We had flown over the snow-covered Black Hills to Deadwood, the Terry Peak ski area, and Pactola Lake and logged 1.5 hours. It was the second flight for my granddaughter and one of many for my daughter.

This article will summarize how I reached 6,000 hours, something most civilian pilots don't achieve unless flying for the airlines.

I began flying in 1973 as I was completing my college career at South Dakota State University in Brookings. I had received a four-year Air Force ROTC scholarship to college (solving how to pay for college). A stipulation of the scholarship was I had to be flight-qualified, and my degree had to major in math, science, or engineering. I chose to get a degree in Civil Engineering and had to take the difficult Air Force Officer Qualification Test for pilots. I was only 17 years old with a high school education from a small school in Lakefield, Minn.

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An American Aviation AA1 Yankee. Photo used under Wikimedia Commons license.

Four years later, I was nearing completion of my degree as the Fall '73 semester began, after which I would graduate and be commissioned in the Air Force. I reported 2 weeks early to college that fall to attend pilot ground school taught by an Air Force pilot who was one of our ROTC instructors. After one week of ground school, our small class of maybe 10 students began flying at the local Brookings airport, being taught by a local instructor in a two-seat Grumman American AA-1B Trainer, a version of the now popular 4-seat Grumman AA-2 Tiger.

I've always loved flying Grumman aircraft because they have a "stick" instead of a "yoke," as seen in most light aircraft. The Grumman was also very responsive on the controls, a trait I enjoy in an aircraft. I learned that it also flew very similar to the first plane I'd fly in pilot training, the Cessna T-37 jet trainer.

My first flight was on Sept. 4, 1973, and I soloed after only 6 hours in the AA-1B and received 36.5 hours of flight in the Air Force provided training program there at Brookings. (SDSU did not have an aviation program in those days.) My first solo cross-country was a flight to Huron that I had to abort and return to Brookings due to a low layer of clouds that almost beat me back to Brookings. The clouds were not in the forecast, and Flight Service was unaware of them.

At college graduation four months later, I was commissioned and received a distinguished graduate award from ROTC. I was supposed to report to pilot training within two months, but the great gas crisis of 1973-74 struck, and the Air Force, also short on fuel, delayed hundreds of newly commissioned officers from going to pilot training.

We were given options not to go to pilot training and take a reserve officer commission (not for me), go to navigator training with the (low) potential to later go to pilot training (nope), or to wait (and wait)

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for the call to report for pilot training. I chose to wait and only had to wait for four extra months. (I had friends who waited for 2 years.)



While waiting, I returned to my hometown in Minnesota, took a factory job in nearby Jackson, and met my soon to be future wife, June. I also found a Grumman AA-1A at the airport in nearby Worthington, so I began to pay for flying lessons and 7.3 hours later took a check ride and received my private pilot certificate on Feb. 17, 1974. The next day, I took my new “girlfriend” flying. Three and a half months later, we got married! I guess that flight hooked her because we are still married 43 years later.

Just three weeks after the wedding, we headed to Phoenix, Arizona, to report into the Air Force at the premier pilot training base, Williams Air Force Base. Classroom training began immediately at “Willie” the first week of July, and on Aug 1, 1974, I had my first flight in the T-37. Wow, a jet! What a kick in the pants (although nothing like later jets I flew.)

On that first flight, my instructor, Capt. Jim Lacey, showed me normal flying maneuvers and the not so normal “spin.” A spin was a maneuver we had to master, but I was a little intimidated after that first one when my seat belt became un-fastened in the zero-g recovery, and I slammed my head against the plexiglass canopy. I never quite trusted them as a student after that. (However, later, as an instructor, I loved them!)

A short 15 hours later, Capt. Lacey turned me loose to solo. I was one of the first in my class of about 100 students. Another 15 hours, and I took my first of many Air Force check rides, doing acrobatics, spins, slow flight, stalls, and landings. I don’t remember the flight, but my logbook says I scored an 88.6%, which I guess was pretty good. The instructor was Capt. Lance Smith, with whom I later became good friends.

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A T-37B. USAF photo.

At 92 hours, I took an instrument ride with Capt. “Santa Clause” Jacobsen, who was known to be pretty easy. I remember having an excellent flight. After the flight, he commented he would give me the best score he’d ever given! Wow. Then he proceeded to evaluate my emergency procedures knowledge verbally. It was going well until he asked the simple procedure for an engine fire on takeoff. This was to be memorized, so I quickly spit out the procedure. A pained look came over his face, and I realized I’d spewed out the wrong steps.

So, I quickly corrected myself. He closed his eyes and then said he’d have to mark me down for the wrong response. Then he gave me the 2nd highest grade he’d ever given, a 97.5%. I was fortunate since he could have made it a failing grade.

Our final check ride in the T-37 happened nine flight hours later. More spins, acrobatics, stalls, and landings. I loved loops and split “S.” Spins, not so much. Then we had some fun flights. We were past the check rides and now got to fly formation with another aircraft. We had two flights with instructors and then a solo flight with an instructor in the 2nd aircraft. What fun!

After 86.6 hours in the T-37, I graduated about 4th in the class of now 80 students. And then quickly began the academic training for the T-38.

The T-38 was the premier training jet of the time, and it separated “the men from the boys.” The world’s first supersonic training aircraft, it had a takeoff speed of about 160 knots and a landing speed of generally 175 knots on final. (Our Cessnas in CAP have a top speed of about 125 knots and final speed of 70-80 knots.) The plane was flown by the USAF Thunderbirds and NASA used it to fly astronauts around the country. And now I was flying it. One good piece of news – no spins were allowed!

My first flight came on Dec 16, 1974, and since I had done so well in the T-37, they gave me a brand-new instructor. New instructors and the T-38 didn’t work well. They sat in the limited visibility back seat of this high-powered jet and were generally scared that a student would kill them, especially on landing. One problem the jet had was that once you pulled the throttles to idle on landing if you messed up the

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landing (easy to do) it took 8-10 seconds for the engines to reach full power again. That's a huge delay if you are about to crash on landing.

So, the less trusting new instructors tended not to let the students really learn to land by messing up. My instructor was like that. I can't blame him. He had seen (and I saw later) several crashes, killing students and instructors.



A T-38 Talon. USAF photo.

Shortly before my solo flight, I was grounded with a broken bone in my foot. Three weeks later, I got to fly again and soloed, but my landings weren't as good as they should have been.

Nine flights later, I had a not so good of a check ride. On takeoff, I was to simulate an engine failure and then execute a landing with one engine. All was well until I realized just before landing that I didn't have enough engine power to reach the runway. I initiated a go-around, adding power. After that eight-second delay, the jet started climbing again, just after kissing the ground in the paved overrun, short of the runway by about 50 feet. Not a great start to the ride. The instructor figured it was all over for me. BUT, I flew to our practice area and flew an excellent flight from there. I came back to the airport and had several acceptable, but not great, landings.

The result: A failed check ride. That led to two "freebie" flights with an experienced instructor where I got extra landings. However, that still didn't quite do it, and my next check ride resulted in another bust. My slipping confidence also caused some not quite right maneuvers in the practice area. Now I was in big trouble. I could expect two more "freebies" and one final chance to pass the check ride. After my sterling time in the T-37, I was now only three flights from washing out of pilot training!

(To be continued.) 

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SOUTH DAKOTA WING

Wing Adapts to COVID-19 Challenges

Despite difficulties arising from the pandemic and related restrictions, the South Dakota Wing's more than 400 members continued to live by Civil Air Patrol's core values: Respect, Volunteer Service, Integrity and Excellence.

As exhibited by a search and rescue mission on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation on Thanksgiving weekend, wing members responded quickly and competently when called on. In

coordination with the Oglala Lakota County sheriff and the Oglala Sioux Tribe, wing searchers were able to find a missing 14-year-old boy.

The South Dakota Wing continues to show excellence in the growth of its small Unmanned Aerial Systems (sUAS) program. The wing continues to acquire updated sUAS and uses them in search and rescue and other missions.

The wing also assisted the South Dakota Air National Guard in November with training for "slow-and-low" aerial interceptions, as the Guard's F-16s intercepted a propeller-driven CAP Cessna 182 plane. Besides helping the Guard train, the exercise also served as an excellent training opportunity for wing members.

Lt. Col. Todd Epp (left), South Dakota Wing chief of staff, and Chief Master Sgt. Blake Parke, the wing's external aerospace education officer, work to get an sUAS operating during a Sioux Falls Composite Squadron aerospace education event.



South Dakota Wing 2020 Statistics

Volunteer Members

318 adult members
142 cadets
63 aircrew personnel
250 emergency responders

Squadrons

12 locations statewide

Aircraft

6 single gliders
1 glider

Vehicles

19 vehicles

Interoperable Communications

11 VHF/FM repeaters
107 VHF/FM stations
30 HF stations

Missions

4 search and rescue missions
 1 life saved*
 1 find*
* Includes life saved and find credited with national team support
1 air defense intercept training and evaluation mission
3 CAP, AFROTC and AFJROTC cadet orientation flight missions
6 other Air Force support missions
13 training missions
4 other state support missions
1 other mission in support of partner agencies and organizations or local municipalities

Significant Events Supported in Fiscal Year 2020

114th Fighter Wing low-level route survey; 28th Bomb Wing low-level route survey; Felix Keynote; Ellsworth AFB emergency training support

COVID-19 Mission Support

Delivery of vaccine to rural areas of South Dakota

Cadet Flying

267 CAP, AFROTC and AFJROTC cadet orientation flights

Total Hours Flown

761

Financial

\$45,390 in state funding
\$1,283,493 value of wing's volunteer hours

Region Commander

Col. John O'Neill
joneill@cap.gov

Wing Commander

Col. Nicholas Gengler
nicholas.gengler@sdwg.cap.gov

Government Relations Advisor

Lt. Col. Todd D. Epp
todd.epp@sdwg.cap.gov

Wing Info

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Website

sdwg.cap.gov

DID YOU KNOW?

- ✓ Lt. Col. Lois Schmidt, a member of the Pierre Composite Squadron, was one of the wing's earliest members as a cadet serving during World War II in the same squadron.
- ✓ Nearly every lawmaker in South Dakota's 105-member Legislature is a member of the South Dakota Wing's Legislative Squadron.
- ✓ Because South Dakota is a large state geographically, the wing held cadet aerospace education days on the state's east and west sides to accommodate travel and more opportunities for orientation flights.



S.D. Wing gets new wind tunnel for aerospace study

*By Maj. Tim Modde, CAP
SDWG Director of Aerospace Education*

In February of 2020, Wing Director of Aerospace Education, Maj. Tim Modde, asked Capt. John Spangler of the Rushmore Composite Squadron, to build a wind tunnel to be used as a wing asset for South Dakota squadrons.

The wind tunnel's purpose was to provide a first-hand visual demonstration of aeronautical principles and allow cadets to experiment with aerodynamics. After over 200 hours of work and nearly \$1,000 of donated funds, the wind tunnel was finally finished. The wind tunnel unit is nine feet long by two feet high by one foot wide and is easily portable.

Nine differing fiberglass airfoil sections were constructed and are easily interchangeable within the wind tunnel unit. These airfoils demonstrate the difference between a bird wing, a Cessna wing, a jet transport wing, a thin section jet fighter wing, and a wing with leading-edge slats and trailing edge Fowler flaps.

Airflow tufts were added to six airfoils to clearly demonstrate the turbulent airflow of a stalled



Exterior of the SDWG wind tunnel. Photo by Maj. John Spangler, CAP.

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wing. An operations manual was written and is mounted on the primary fan. Operators must complete mastery of the operations manual before operating this equipment in the classroom environment.

Besides providing hands-on aeronautical experimentation, the instrument was constructed with a strong emphasis on safety for both operators and observers. Last September, a new Senior Member in the Crazy Horse Squadron, a former CAP Cadet and Air Force Academy graduate Tom Fritz joined the effort and added additional components to the wind tunnel. This included a straw-based wind stabilizer that improved the uniformity of flow through the tunnel and added a smoke rake that enhanced visual observation of wind flowing over experimental wings.

To aid the experimental phase of aerodynamics, Tom constructed an instrument to cut Styrofoam into a wing's shape. Using his unique templates, he cut various shapes of wings that could then be measured on a wing tester to determine actual lift. The combination of wind tunnel and wing tester will allow cadets to visualize the aerodynamics of lift and then experiment with testing their own wings' capability.

Curricula is currently being developed to assist Aerospace Education Officers in the Wing to illustrate aerodynamics to Cadets with these tools. This wind tunnel apparatus is to be used by squadrons throughout the Wing. A video is currently being prepared to illustrate the wind tunnel's capability and instructions on its use.

Once the restrictions forced by COVID-19 are behind us, the wind tunnel, wing building tool, and wing tester will be available to individual squadrons. The video on the capability and instructions on using the instruments will be available to Aerospace Education Officers, Squadron Commanders, and others. Those wanting additional information may contact Maj. Modde.



Interior of the SDWG wind tunnel. Photo by Maj. John Spangler, CAP.

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